
NEWS AND VIEWS

EDITORIAL

What is News and Views?

Those people who obsessively store all the back numbers of this and every other journal they get—might we call them bibliofiles?—will by direct observation be able to see that this journal ain't like it used to be. Those who live in smaller houses, or who take greater pleasure in filling their waste paper baskets, will have to take it from us that compared to volume 1 in 1958, it is a different colour, a different size, a different shape, and, from today, has something different inside it. By 1978 it became plain that the College was so active, and producing so many ideas and plans, that better ways of setting up discussions between members, and between headquarters and the faculties, had to be established. The section tinted blue which begins on this page is the fruit of these three years of thinking, talking, planning and negotiation

by the editors, their advisory boards and the publications committee of the College Council on the one hand, and the publishers and the printers on the other.

What has been established is a fast lane. Normal *Journal* articles are sent to the publishers, and thence to the printers, 53 working days before publication, but what we might call the blue material will have a gestation of only 28. Hence, and here we are speaking to potential contributors, a letter or a short article for the blue pages has to be in our hands in finished form a month before the *Journal* appears. We hope, however, that contributors will remember that because we are a monthly, missing the issue of, say, November by even one day will result in the letter or whatever coming out a whole month later.

What will appear in News and Views? A look at pages 689-702 will

give some idea, even if the particular selection this month does not convey the full flavour of what we hope to get in future. Because it is in a sense separate from the main body of the *Journal*, which is the place for serious, carefully considered and, we hope, important reports of original research, we expect to be able to print equally serious (and also sometimes light-hearted) thoughtful and important articles about the College itself. "Why is the College doing such and such in my name?", cries a member in deepest East Anglia. No longer need the question be put in the columns of *W**** M****** or the *B***** M***** J******. The columns are here; they belong to you; use them. We will print you—and the replies, which we hope will come as thick and fast from members everywhere as from those who someone once (well, it was more than once, actually) described as "the College heavies".

Comments, letters, short articles (700 words maximum), reposts, rebuttals, explanations, cartoons and other appropriate material received by 16 November will make our January issue of *News and Views*.

COLLEGE NEWS

Summary of Council Meeting

The fifth meeting of the 1981 Council was held at the College on 19 September, with Dr A. G. Donald in the Chair.

After twice experiencing the inadequate acoustics of the Long Room, Council went back to the cosier surroundings of the John Hunt Room. The Chairman expressed the delight of Council at seeing the President back in their midst after his recent illness; Dr Horder replied that he had been deeply moved by the many letters, gifts and visits he had received, and asked Council to note how considerate he had been to fall ill just at the beginning of August, when the least amount of extra work would fall on other Officers.

Restructuring the College's Administration

It was under Matters Arising that Council had its longest and most important

debate. After handing over the chair to the Vice Chairman, Dr Donald introduced his own paper which continued the theme of Strategies for the Eighties (see reports of March and June Council *July Journal*, p.436; *September Journal*, p.562). He pointed out that his proposals were the culmination of a process begun a long time before, when the College first began to think seriously about its role in the last years of this century. The reasons for re-shaping the administration were several, but could be reduced to one; for the annual expenditure of half a million pounds, he did not feel the College was cost-effective. Younger members rightly have rising expectations of their own academic body, and he agreed that the College was not making enough impression on the members and the faculties. He called for action: the thinking and talking had gone on long enough.

He therefore suggested a completely

new structure, consisting of three executive divisions—Research, Education and Communications. Each division would have an annual budget, and a small executive would run its day-to-day affairs. Some of the existing committees would survive, but others (Board of Censors, Practice Organization and Education) would go, leaving room for the many new subgroups and working parties such as the Medicines Surveillance Centre, the Computer Policy Group, Prestel, and the Open University, which have been born in the last year or two but which did not fit into the old structure. More working groups would undoubtedly be needed, and it was to the Faculties that Dr Donald expected that much work would be devolved. The divisional executives would integrate the activities of all the committees and working groups within them, but would be accountable to Council, and it would be Council which would formulate policy and allocate the annual budget. It would no longer be concerned with the kind of detail which lately had stultified its meetings and prevented proper time being given to serious discussion